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ARTICLES:

(1) U.S. to demand "strong support for USFJ" at foreign ministerial meeting in Hawaii

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)  
Evening, January 8, 2010

Satoshi Ogawa in Washington

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Kurt Campbell held a news conference in Washington on Jan. 7 and announced formally that Secretary of State Hillary Clinton will meet Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada in Hawaii on Jan. 12.

At the meeting, Clinton and Okada will agree to launch talks on deepening the bilateral alliance on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the revision of the Japan-U.S. security treaty. Campbell also indicated that Clinton will ask the Japanese government to provide "strong support" for the U.S. Marines in Okinawa and U.S. Forces Japan (USFJ).

Campbell pointed out that "the security alliance is the core of the Japan-U.S. relationship." He said: "The U.S. would like the Japanese government to provide strong support for robust troops in Okinawa, particularly for the presence of the Marines," demanding progress in the issue of the relocation of the USFJ's Futenma Air Station. He added, "Security issues are important in an Asia characterized by complexity and undergoing major changes. The U.S. wants a very clear declaration (from the Japanese side) of its intent to continue close cooperation with the U.S." He indicated that the U.S. will confirm this in the talks on deepening the alliance.

Campbell also stated: "The Japan-U.S. alliance provides the basis for economic development in Asia. Today, when the U.S. talks with its Asian friends, the first topic that comes up is: 'We want Japan and the U.S. to maintain a strong relationship'." He disclosed that Asian countries have expressed their concern about the present state of the Japan-U.S. relationship to the U.S. directly.

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The foreign ministerial meeting is also expected to cover a broad range of other issues, including North Korea, China, and climate change.

(2) "Seiron" column: U.S. should be patient with regard to strengthening the Japan-U.S. relationship

SANKEI (Page 7) (Full)  
January 8, 2010

Hisahiko Okazaki, former ambassador to Thailand

Complete lack of mutual understanding

The relationship of trust between Japan and the United States is in the worst state ever.

The U.S. President refused to see the Japanese Prime Minister when he asked to meet him to give an explanation. On the other hand, when the Prime Minister said he had obtained (the U.S.'s) understanding through his conversation with the Secretary of State, the Secretary summoned the Japanese ambassador to the U.S. for the sole purpose of telling him that she had not indicated her approval.

The "Nixon shock" comes to mind if you look for past examples of such a degree of lack of mutual understanding. At their summit meeting in 1969, President Richard Nixon made a commitment to return Okinawa to Japan, while Prime Minister Eisaku Sato pledged voluntary regulation of textile exports to the U.S. The official version of this story is that this was a mistranslation of a pledge to "take appropriate measures," but what I heard from an insider at that time is that a participant in the meeting had been worried, thinking: Is it okay to say that much? The remarks made at that meeting were indeed strong expressions comparable to Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama's words "trust me" at the summit meeting last autumn.

Subsequently, the U.S. side repeatedly conveyed its demand for the fulfillment of the pledge, but the Japanese side simply continued with inconclusive negotiations. In 1971, the U.S.-China rapprochement took place over the head of Japan, and when the double shock of ending the gold standard for the dollar came, an informed U.S. source said this was a penalty for Japan's breach of trust.

Prospects for present case uncertain

This came as an extremely serious blow. The ending of the gold standard for the dollar brought about the most serious economic recession in Japan in the postwar period. In addition, the China issue inflicted irreparable damage on the process of Japan-U.S. coordination on policy toward Beijing. Japan and the U.S. had been solidly united as allies, but this started a situation where the two countries share no common policy toward China -- a situation that still continues. This has even affected domestic politics in Japan.

At that time, I had a discussion with Ambassador to the U.S. Nobuhiko Ushiba in Washington about why this situation came about. We realized that there had not been a single Japan-U.S. summit meeting since the pledges were made in 1969, except for a brief meeting during the UN General Assembly in 1970. Both Ambassador Ushiba and I lamented then that if the two leaders had met, Japan might have detected signs of a subtle policy change in the U.S. government, and the Nixon shock could have been avoided.

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However, judging from the present-day Japan-U.S. relationship, the U.S. side might have taken the attitude that there was no need to hold any summit meeting unless Japan was ready to make a pledge to regulate textile exports voluntarily.

With the current level of lack of communication between Japan and the U.S., two issues worry me: the economy and policy toward China, similar to the situation at the time of the Nixon shock. In addition, there is also the question of the U.S. military bases.

I am unable to conceive a scenario for the immediate future, and even prospects for the near future are uncertain. Such was also the situation in 1970-71.

Drawing an analogy between the situation then and the present Japan-U.S. crisis, if the dollar and the Chinese yuan pegged to it cause a sharp appreciation of the yen, it will deal a serious blow to the Japanese economy, even though such a scenario is still unthinkable at present.

The issue of U.S. military bases is even more serious. There are still leftist forces in Japan that have been working to weaken the Japan-U.S. alliance after the Cold War. If the military solidarity between Japan and the U.S. is weakened, they will not be concerned, but will instead press for further weakening of the alliance, in the name "reducing the burden." This could result in irreparable damage to the Japan-U.S. alliance.

It is quite easy to prevent this from happening: the Hatoyama administration should fulfill its international commitment.

Time for restoration will come

However, what I would like to appeal for now is patience on the part of the United States.

Even if the Futenma relocation issue is not resolved, the status quo will continue, meaning the U.S. has nothing to lose. In the 15 years since the agreement to return the Futenma base, there has been only one accident, which resulted in no casualties. Even if an accident did occur, the U.S. side would not be responsible; the Japanese side, which has delayed a solution, would be to blame.

The rise of China poses the most serious challenge to the security of East Asia in the future, and even to the security of the world. No matter what countermeasures are contemplated to deal with China's rise, the Japan-U.S. alliance is too valuable an asset to lose.

On the other hand, the Japan-U.S. alliance is slowly approaching its ideal shape, although the process has been taking an excruciatingly long time. A solution to such issues as the right of collective self-defense will be in sight once the next conservative administration comes to power. Mr. Hatoyama's proposal for constitutional revision drafted when he was in the opposition regarded the exercise of the right of collective self-defense not as

a constitutional issue, but as a matter for the government to decide.

On a subconscious level the people have come to firmly believe in giving importance to the Japan-U.S. alliance. The relationship of trust between the armed forces and government offices of the two countries has never been better.

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The U.S. was patient with the Republic of Korea (ROK) during the five years of the previous Roh Moo-hyun administration. (South Koreans may scold me for such a characterization, for while the Hatoyama cabinet terminated the refueling mission in the Indian Ocean, the ROK sent troops to Afghanistan). The realists in the ROK, who were ostracized at that time, are now back in power, giving their support to the U.S.-ROK alliance.

The relationship of trust between Japan and the United States will eventually be restored, and the time will come when the alliance relationship will be strengthened. Until then, I hope the U.S. side will be patient.

(3) Editorial: V-shaped runway plan for Futenma relocation: Do not create future sources of trouble through deception

RYUKYU SHIMPO (Page 2) (Slightly abridged)  
January 8, 2010

The government admitted officially for the first time on Jan. 6 that the Okinawa Prefectural Government never accepted the current "V-shaped runway plan" for the relocation of the Futenma Air Station to the Henoko cape in Nago City, which was agreed upon by Japan and the U.S. under the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP)-New Komeito administration, and which Okinawa supposedly agreed to.

The legitimacy of the existing Henoko relocation plan being promoted by the Japanese and U.S. governments has become very questionable.

This is just the tip of the iceberg. It is necessary to conduct a thorough examination of the Futenma relocation plan which the previous LDP-New Komeito administration had pushed for arbitrarily, if only for the sake of building a Japan-U.S. relationship unblemished by lies and deception.

The "V-shaped plan" consists of building two additional V-shaped runways in the plan to relocate the Futenma base to Henoko in order to prevent noise by avoiding residential areas in the flight routes.

Nago City reached an agreement with the government on this plan in July 2006, but then Governor Keiichi Inamine refused to give his approval.

However, the Ministry of Defense and the government claim that "the Okinawa government has also indicated its acceptance" (according to then Director General Fushiro Nukaga of the Defense Agency) based on the "basic confirmation" document exchanged with Okinawa. In February 2007, Defense Minister Fumio Kyuma also told the United States that, "Fortunately, Okinawa basically agrees (to the plan)."

However, Governor Inamine has consistently denied that Okinawa officially agreed to the plan by saying that although he signed the "basic confirmation," he "did not agree."

The question boils down to what this "basic confirmation" document was supposed to signify. Governor Inamine's perception was that this was different from an agreement. On the other hand, the government has consistently argued that the basic confirmation on the agreement reached between the national government and Nago City was equivalent to an "agreement," and therefore, "Okinawa also agreed."

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The rejection of the current relocation plan is an important

question in the relocation issue, which has resulted in an outcry that it will bring about the deterioration of the Japan-U.S. alliance or the Japan-U.S. relationship. Yet, the government has dealt with this issue by leaving the question of the local authorities' agreement ambiguous. This is outrageous.

Governor Inamine cannot also avoid being held responsible for signing a "basic confirmation" that could be misunderstood as an "agreement."

Even if he signed the document in a desperate effort to evade the difficult situation of the government's insistent demands for him to sign an agreement, this act that ran counter to popular will and was later taken advantage of by the government is unforgivable.

Misunderstanding and deception will only end up causing problems in the future and leading to tragedy. This situation has already created confusion in the Japan-U.S. relationship. The government should stop its deception and the Okinawa Prefectural Government should refrain from making statements and taking actions that could give rise to misunderstanding.

(4) Political Scene: Miscalculation - part 1: Prime minister loses "loyal retainer"

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Excerpts)  
January 8, 2010

Former Finance Minister Hirohisa Fujii conveyed his decision to step down to Prime Minister Hatoyama on Jan. 5. With Hatoyama indicating his intention to ask him to remain in the post, it appeared that it would take time to settle this issue. However, Hatoyama gave up his intention to persuade Fujii to stay in office.

Hatoyama on the morning of the 6th told Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirano: "If we allow this situation to drag on, a view that the feud between the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) Secretary General Ozawa and Fujii has led to Fujii's resignation would spread. I must act promptly."

Hatoyama conveyed this to Hirano on the morning of the 6th and started selecting a successor to Fujii.

Fujii was previously one of close aides to Ozawa. They acted together since they were Liberal Democratic Party members and entered the DPJ in 2003. However, their relations began fraying from around the time when Fujii served as secretary general, when Katsuya Okawa (now foreign minister) was the leader of the DPJ. Their confrontation became decisive when Fujii broached the possibility of Ozawa quitting as DPJ leader over the illegal political funds donation scandal involving Nishimatsu Construction Co.

Hatoyama by all means wanted to stave off a situation in which Fujii's resignation became a serious problem involving the influence-wielding Ozawa.

When it became certain that Hatoyama administration would come into being, following the landslide victory of the DPJ, Fujii presented a plan for a cabinet line-up to Hatoyama. The plan called for Fujii's serving as state minister for national policy in charge of overall

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affairs beside the prime minister, while having Okada as finance minister and Kan as foreign minister.

However, it was impossible to appoint Fujii, who was at odds with Ozawa, to a central role. Hatoyama offered Fujii the finance ministerial post. Fujii reluctantly accepted it.

Fujii devoted all his energy to the compilation of the budget. When the budget compilation process was reaching the final stage, there occurred an incident that hurt his pride. On Dec. 16 Ozawa visited the Prime Minister's official residence (Kantei) and submitted the party's priority requests to Hatoyama and Fujii.

With a microphone in his hand, Ozawa, while looking at Fujii, made a

harsh remark, "The budget has not been written at the initiative of politicians." Ozawa's decision was to maintain the provisional gas tax rate. Fujii had replied in the Diet, "It is only natural to scrap the provisional tax rates." Fujii lost his face because of this incident.

Fujii, on the evening of the 25th, when the budget was adopted at a cabinet meeting, was drinking with senior Finance Ministry officials. He repeatedly said to them, "Thank you," while shaking hands with them. Some pointed out, "Mr. Fujii perhaps resigned because he burned out after the completion of a difficult job."

Ozawa's influence was felt during the process of picking a successor to Fujii as well.

Hatoyama at noon of the 6th met with State Minister for National Policy Kan (at the time) at the Kantei. Kan said, "It is better to decide on a successor to Mr. Fujii today." He proposed promoting Vice Finance Minister Yoshihiko Noda. Hatoyama hinted at shifting State Minister for Government Revitalization to the finance ministerial post. He did not mention Kan's name. However, Hatoyama four hours later telephoned Kan and asked him to serve as finance minister. Kan accepted the offer. What happened during those four hours?

A senior DPJ official close to Ozawa on the evening of the 6th told the press corps: "Mr. Kan was the only person to fill the finance minister post." This source said Sengoku and Noda are not suitable for the post, since they are on bad terms with Ozawa. According to a source connected with the DPJ, these views heard in the party were conveyed to the Kantei, even before Hatoyama made the decision to pick Kan.

Whenever he met Hatoyama, Fujii always said to him, "I will do as the prime minister says." Now Hatoyama's loyal retainer is gone. Both Foreign Minister Okada and Transport Minister Maehara, who are keeping Ozawa at arm's length, have also lost Fujii, who served as a shield against Ozawa.

A lawmaker close to Ozawa said with satisfaction on the 7th: "Now that Mr. Kan has been installed in the finance minister post, it has become impossible for him to map out a policy strategy with an eye to his succeeding Hatoyama as prime minister. The Hatoyama-Ozawa structure has been further solidified."

(5) Sea Shepherd boat collision: Japan may consider applying antipiracy law

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MAINICHI (Page 2) (Full)  
January 8, 2010

The collision between a Japanese whaling ship and a protest boat operated by the Sea Shepherd anti-whaling group has created controversy at home and abroad. At a press conference on Jan. 7, Akira Gunji, senior vice minister of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, strongly criticized the Sea Shepherd side, noting that the anti-whaling group was to blame for the incident. He revealed that his ministry has asked countries concerned to strengthen controls. He also indicated the possibility of Japan looking into applying the antipiracy law in case the protests expand. Meanwhile, Australia, at which Sea Shepherd vessels call, has been having a hard time coping with the intensifying public protests against whaling.

Government lodges complaint with Australia, New Zealand

Referring at a press conference to Sea Shepherd's anti-whaling activities, Gunji said: "These are dangerous acts threatening our country's shipping and the lives of crew members. We will never allow such activities." He clarified that the government had lodged a complaint through diplomatic channels to New Zealand, where the protest boat is registered, and Australia, where it calls.

Japanese Ambassador Toshihiro Takahashi complained to the New

Zealand government, noting that "the collision occurred because of the protest boat's activities to disrupt the Japanese whaling vessel's operations and that Japan cannot allow activities threatening the safety of crew members and the ship."

When asked by reporters about views calling for the government to designate Sea Shepherd as a pirate organization, Gunji responded by saying, "We need to hold discussions with the Foreign Ministry and other organizations. If Sea Shepherd continues to threaten the lives of crew members and property of Japanese ships, that will constitute a situation in which we will have to consult with other agencies."

The antipiracy law was established last June to crack down on pirates off Somalia. If the law is applied, the Japan Coast Guard and Self-Defense Forces (SDF) will be able to wield administrative authority, including the use of weapons even on the high seas. According to an informed source, Shigeru Ishiba, former agriculture minister, when he was in office, urged application of the law to Sea Shepherd, but cautious views in the the government at the time put discussion of his proposal on the back burner.

A senior Fisheries Agency official said: "We are desperate for any help....I wonder if Japanese patrol vessels and other boats can deal with small-sized high-speed power boats." A senior Foreign Ministry official as well was negative to the idea, saying, "In view of the contents of the law (stipulating that robbing someone of money and valuables is piracy), it has been decided that Sea Shepherd is not subject to the law."

Australia caught between public opinion and Japan

The governments of Australia and New Zealand announced on Jan. 7 that they have ordered their own coast guards to investigate the collision incident this time around.

The two nations, which both oppose whaling, are near waters where

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research whaling is conducted and have played important roles in activities of Sea Shepherd. In particular, Australia has become the base for Sea Shepherd's protest vessels. It is noticeable that Australian media have released reports based on the Sea Shepherd side's assertion that the Japanese ship deliberately rammed its boat.

Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard said at a press conference yesterday, "It was miracle that no one was killed," and mentioned again the possibility of Australia taking the research whaling problem to the International Court.

During the campaign for the 2007 general election, the Australian Labor Party, led by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, stressed firm opposition to research whaling in order to distinguish itself from the ruling party. Backed by antiwhaling public opinion, the party won the election. Even after the danger of Sea Shepherd's act of sabotage has become obvious, it is difficult for the party to make a stern response. With a general election taking place this year, the Labor Party-led government will likely be forced to make a difficult decision, as it is caught between anti-whaling public sentiment, which apparently will flare up again, and relations with Japan.

Meanwhile, Sea Shepherd has carried out a publicity strategy of playing up the image of being a hero fighting for whales even in the teeth of an attack against it by Japan. The antiwhaling group has underscored the damage to its protest boat and declared that it will continue disrupting Japan's research whaling. It apparently aims to collect funding through U.S. and European media.

Citing Australians being included in the protest boat's crew members, Sea Shepherd is calling for the deployment of Australian naval vessels. While rocking the Australian government by appealing to public opinion, it apparently intends to intensify confrontation between Japan and anti-whaling countries.

(6) Editorial: Japan urged to take resolute measures against illegal acts of obstruction to research whaling

The Japanese whaling fleet vessel Shonan Maru No.2 and the anti-whaling group Sea Shepherd Conservation Society's high-tech stealth boat Ady Gil collided in the Southern Ocean.

The Sea Shepherd side has claimed that the Japanese ship suddenly collided with the boat when it was not underway. However, the anti-whaling group's protest boats have carried out obstructive acts repeatedly. In addition to approaching dangerously close to or cutting in front of Japanese whaling vessels, the boats have thrown bottles containing chemical irritants at the ships and aimed laser beams toward the crew that can lead to loss of vision if they are directed at the eyes. It is apparent that their persistent obstructive acts caused the collision.

They are free to advocate the need to protect the environment and call for banning anti-whaling activities. But this incident goes beyond the question of whether or not research whaling activities should be conducted. Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirofumi Hirano lodged a stern complaint with the government of New Zealand, where the Ady Gil is registered. Simply lodging a complaint is not enough. Japan

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should hammer out resolute measures to counter violent acts, which can be called anti-whaling terrorism.

Why are the activists not arrested on suspicion of forcible obstruction of business? Research whaling is a legal activity endorsed by the International Whaling Commission (IWC). But the anti-whaling group has repeatedly carried out dangerous acts against Japanese research vessels, such as ramming the ships with protest boats and throwing ropes into their screws. There was even a case in which anti-whalers illegally climbed aboard a Japanese ship.

When violent activities by anti-whalers occurred in the past, the Japanese government lodged protests with the Netherlands, where some of the Sea Shepherd boats are registered, and Australia, where the group bases its operations. The government also urged these countries to take preventive steps. But these countries, which are opposed to whaling, have not developed any effective countermeasures.

Anti-whalers' violent activities could become life-threatening to the crews. We wonder why Japan has not taken resolute countermeasures.

The government takes the view that it is impossible under the current relevant laws for Japanese authorities to arrest and capture suspects on foreign ships on the open sea. The antipiracy law, which was enacted last year, makes it possible to arrest pirates under such conditions, but the law does not apply to violent cases involving Sea Shepherd based on the view that its members are not categorized as pirates.

Taking advantage of Japan's stance of not taking countermeasures, the anti-whaling group committed this violent act. Japan should emphasize in the international community that anti-whaling terrorism is tantamount to piracy.

In sovereign nations, people who conduct illegal activities by using force are arrested and punished as a matter of course. A nation that cannot do that is not regarded as a sovereign one.

We cannot continue to allow Japanese whaling fleet vessels to navigate the seas defenselessly.

(Corrected copy): Hirano denies possibility of visit to Nanjing by Hatoyama

Several news agencies have reported that the Chinese government has



unofficially proposed a visit to Nanjing by Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama and a tour of Hiroshima by Chinese President Hu Jintao. Concerning these reports, Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirofumi Hirano said at a press conference yesterday: "I am aware of the reports, but I don't believe there is any truth to them." In reference to the possibility of Hatoyama visiting Nanjing, he remarked: "At present, we are not considering that possibility at all."

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